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## The Labrys: Claiming our Lesbian Heritage

Women, and lesbians in particular, have a long and fond association with the labrys or double-headed axe. In a world where male history dominates female **herstory**, we need to go back to learn about our past.

The labrys was both a symbol of Goddess culture, fertility and used as a tool in agriculture. It was celebrated in Greek culture and later by the Amazonian women in battle. When mounted between cattle horns, the labrys was the holiest of Goddess symbols. What is so special about the labrys is that it was only used by women. It came in all sizes being worn as jewelry or being carved as nine feet tall symbols of religion which stood at the end of altars.

When usually view the labrys as an upright axe with blades coming out of the handle to the left and right, that is in an upright position. However, it was also viewed on its side with an hourglass figure that was associated with the female body. When viewed this way, it was honored as the Goddess or Mother Earth figure. It symbolized the female labia at the entrance of the womb. In either position it also came to symbolize the womb and a butterfly that symbolized rebirth. Rebirth was seen around these ancient women in the death and regeneration of trees and crops. The two heads reminded the women of the waxing and waning of the moon and their monthly menstruation. All connected to the birth of new crops and the birth of human life.

Lesbians are drawn to a woman society. In relationships they give birth to love and purposeful living. Many lesbians are mothers to offsprings and mothers to their partners and those with whom they come in contact with. It is a mothering that is creative and empowering of individuals and collectively as a female society. It is a powerful totem against negative people, hatred and indifference.

For many of us, the axe symbolically cuts through prejudice of every kind. In our hands the axe is a powerful weapon of self-love, community service and world-wide celebration of women who love women. We cannot let our labrys rust! Whenever and wherever we can, we must use it to bring justice to our [lesbian](#) sisters (and women in general) in homophobic and misogynist society. Our fight is ongoing and a worthy one.

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